

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS
(Section of the Library Association)


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(Leeds City Libraries)

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Announcements

THE Forty-first Annual General Meeting will be held at Cardiff on Wednesday, 16th June, 1937. The following programme has been arranged:

- 1.0 p.m. Lunch at the City Hall, by kind invitation of the Lord Mayor (Alderman H. Hiles, M.B.E., J.P.).
- 2.30 p.m. Tour of the Civic Centre and Cardiff Castle.
- 3.30 p.m. Tea at Roath Branch Library, by kind invitation of the Chairman of the Cardiff Public Libraries Committee (Alderman W. G. Howell, J.P.).
- 4.30 p.m. Business Meeting at the "Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre of the National Museum of Wales (Park Place entrance)."

In view of the outstanding importance of the business to be transacted at this meeting, it is hoped that there will be a large and representative attendance.

Will London members who propose to be present please get in touch with Mr. Pugsley, Branch Library, High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, not later than 7th June, in order that he may make the usual arrangements for travelling. It is proposed that London members should travel on the 8.55 a.m. train from Paddington, arriving at Cardiff 11.45 a.m. The return journey would be made on the 6.35 p.m. train from Cardiff, which arrives in London at 9.40 p.m. Train fares: 14s. each for a party of more than 30; 19s. 2d. for a party between 8 and 30 in number.

Other members should forward their names to the President not later than 7th June.

It is realized that many of our members will be unable to travel to Cardiff. But since it is essential for item 4 on the agenda for that Meeting to be decided by the widest possible expression of opinion, we appeal to ALL who will not be there to fill in the special voting slip circulated with this issue and the Annual Report, and return it as instructed thereon, as soon as possible. Ponder well the Hon. Secretary's exposition of the issues, in this number—but *don't keep your conclusions to yourself!*



About 100 members of the London and Home Counties Branch and the Assistants' Section of the Library Association met at Watford on 28th April. A visit to the Sun Engraving Works was followed by tea at the Central

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Library and a welcome from Alderman Bridges, C.C. (Chairman of the Watford Libraries Committee). Mr. R. F. Ashby then read a paper entitled "The German public library." This was the outcome of a two months' sojourn while exchanging duties with a Leipzig library assistant. Mr. Ashby gave a clear picture of the essential differences between English and German libraries, paying attention to German intensive guidance for a limited number of readers in place of our almost uncontrolled mass reading. Messrs. Wilks and Wharton proposed and seconded a vote of thanks to Mr. Ashby, after which discussion took the form of a "battery of questions." Dr. Berner, of the Anglo-German Academic Bureau, amplified Mr. Ashby's observations, and members left well pleased with their visit. The interest of the meeting was increased by a well-produced programme, for which, as for the general arrangements and hospitality, Mr. Bolton deservedly received warm thanks.

DIVISIONAL OFFICERS

NORTH-EASTERN

Chairman: Miss W. C. DONKIN (Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne).

Secretary: G. S. D. LINDSAY (Tynemouth Public Library, North Shields).

Treasurer: Miss M. L. COATSWORTH (Sunderland).

Recommended books.—"Recommended books" is now nearing the end of its second year of publication, and has become a recognized part of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT each month. Unfortunately, it has not gained ground in support among librarians after its initial impetus. One more experiment in the co-operative bulletin has, apparently, failed. With a circulation below 10,000 copies monthly, the bulletin cannot pay its way financially, and the circulation has now dropped below that. We find it difficult to believe that there are only a handful of libraries in the country which can usefully circulate a bulletin such as "Recommended books," and therefore we make one final appeal for support. Its cost is 18s. per 1,000 copies, 12s. 6d. per 500, and 7s. per 250, postage free. All subscribers are notified in advance of books to be included, and all are welcome to suggest books for inclusion. Inquiries should be addressed to F. M. Gardner, Kensal Rise Library, Bathurst Gardens, N.W.10.

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The Future of the A.A.L.

THE HON. SECRETARY

MATTERS connected with the relationship of the A.A.L. and the L.A. have now reached a crisis, and I have been instructed by the Council to publish the following statement in order that every member of the A.A.L. may understand and appreciate the present situation and be conversant with the events which have led up to it. The first part of this statement consists of a memorandum which was circulated by me, on behalf of the Hon. Officers, to all Divisional committees and members of the Council on 17th April. The latter part brings the résumé of events up to 5th May, when the A.A.L. Council met to receive and consider the reports of the Divisional Committees on the memorandum of 17th April.

MEMORANDUM

" THE A.A.L. AND THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

For some time past the question of the relationship of the A.A.L. and the L.A. has occupied the attention of the Officers and Council. The matter was discussed at the March meeting of the Council, and will receive further consideration at the May Council meeting. In order that the Council may have the benefit of the views of the Divisional committees, I have been instructed to prepare and circulate this memorandum for the information and consideration of the Divisional committees. Probably the best method of dealing with this very complicated problem is to outline the sequence of events during the last year or so.

Following upon the rejection of the Amalgamation Proposals by the A.A.L. members at the second ballot which was taken on these proposals, the L.A. Council adopted the following resolution (at its meeting in February 1936): 'That twelve months' notice be given to the Association of Assistant Librarians' Section of the Library Association that the Agreement signed in 1929 be rescinded with a view to negotiations which shall be entered into forthwith for a new agreement between the L.A. and the A.A.L. Section, to operate as from the termination of the 1929 Agreement and to continue until the reorganization proposals have been further considered and adopted by the L.A. or until such time as may be agreed upon.' This notice to terminate the 1929 Agreement was duly forwarded to the A.A.L. Council and received by them at the Council meeting on 4th March, 1936.

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The effect of this notice would have been to terminate the Agreement on 7th February, 1937.

In *February* 1936 the L.A. set up a Reorganization committee, consisting of Messrs. L. R. McColvin, H. M. Cashmore, R. J. Gordon, W. C. Berwick Sayers, G. P. Jones, J. D. Stewart, and W. B. Thorne to consider the Amalgamation Proposals, together with the comments of the Sections and Branches thereon. This committee did not meet until *February* 1937.

At the Annual meeting of the A.A.L., in April 1936, the A.A.L. Council was authorized to enter into negotiations with the L.A. with a view to effecting a new agreement between the A.A.L. and the L.A., as suggested in the latter part of the L.A. resolution of February 1936. The A.A.L. Council selected the Hon. Officers, together with Messrs. Gillett and Haugh, to act for them in this connection, while the L.A. representatives were Messrs. McColvin, Cashmore, and Sayers. At a meeting of these two groups, held on 9th September, 1936, the operation of the notice terminating the 1929 Agreement was postponed until December 1937. At this meeting the A.A.L. representatives were informed that the L.A. Reorganization Committee had not yet met, but it was anticipated that it would meet soon. Further, the L.A. representatives were of the opinion that when the committee did meet, the probable result would be the submission of a scheme differing favourably from the original Amalgamation Proposals. In view of the fact that the L.A. Reorganization Committee had not met, nothing further could be done at that time, but the A.A.L. representatives were assured that the matter would be further considered at a meeting to be held some time in the spring of 1937. From September 1936 onwards the position was that the A.A.L. was awaiting the report of the L.A. Reorganization Committee while under notice of dissolution at the end of 1937.

Early this year the Hon. Officers of the A.A.L. learned that the L.A. Reorganization Committee was about to meet at last. The Officers had also good reason to believe that it was the desire of certain members of the committee to abandon the 1935 Amalgamation Proposals in favour of an alternative scheme which would not contain those reforms which induced the A.A.L. Council to sponsor the Amalgamation Proposals. In view of these facts, I was instructed to seek a meeting with the L.A. representatives, whom we had met on 9th September, 1936, this being in accordance with the assurance given at that meeting. I duly did so on 9th February last. On 11th February the Secretary of the L.A. replied to the effect that 'the L.A. representatives are not in a position to meet the representatives of the

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A.A.L.' Somewhat astonished at this reply, I repeated our request for a meeting, in a letter dated 12th February, pointing out we had been promised such a meeting when we met first in September 1936. To this the Secretary of the L.A. replied, on 15th February, as follows: 'I have consulted the Hon. Officers and the Chairman of the Executive Committee on the subject of your letter of 12th February, and they direct me to point out that they have no authority at present to meet the representatives of the A.A.L. Their mandate was to meet the situation created by the cancellation of the 1929 Agreement, and they met this by their recommendation that it be extended to the end of this year. This completed their mandate, but there would not appear to be any reason why they should not, if instructed by the Council, consider a further extension.'

It being obvious, from the contents of this letter, that there was little hope of securing a meeting with the L.A. representatives, the matter was not pursued any farther. The letter itself, to anyone who has carefully noted the terms of the L.A. resolution of February 1936 (quoted at the beginning of this memorandum) in conjunction with the report of the meeting of 9th September, would seem to be merely an evasion of the issue. It would appear that the desire for negotiation no longer existed as far as the L.A. representatives were concerned. Otherwise it is difficult to see why we were refused the desired meeting, at which the negotiations commenced last September could have been resumed.

Acting on the instructions of the Hon. Officers, I duly reported all the circumstances connected with this matter to the March meeting of the A.A.L. Council. The Council considered the matter in detail and at length. Further consideration of the whole matter was deferred until the May Council meeting in order that steps could be taken to ascertain the views of the Divisional committees.

At the same time the following Resolution was adopted for submission to the L.A. Council: 'The representatives appointed by the L.A. Council in June 1936 to negotiate a new agreement with the A.A.L. having refused a request made on behalf of the A.A.L. for a further meeting, and in view of the position which will arise on 31st December, 1937, on the termination of the 1929 Agreement between the L.A. and the A.A.L., and the duty which rests upon the A.A.L. Council to consult its members at the Annual Meeting of the Section in June next, requests the L.A. Council to indicate forthwith the terms upon which the latter would be prepared to arrange for the continuation of the A.A.L. as a Section of the L.A.' This resolution

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was forwarded to the L.A. on 10th March. As a result thereof, I received a letter, dated 18th March, inviting the A.A.L. to send representatives to meet the members of the L.A. Reorganization Committee on Wednesday, 31st March. The President, the Vice-President, and myself attended on behalf of the A.A.L. At that meeting we were informed that the L.A. Reorganization Committee had considered our resolution. In their view there could only be two alternatives :

- (a) That the A.A.L. remain as a Section of the L.A., but within the framework of By-laws E 8-16 (*see* L.A. Year Book).
- (b) That the notice terminating the Section be allowed to become effective, in which case the A.A.L. would go out of existence.

It should be noted that the use of the term 'go out of existence' in (b) is not strictly accurate : the A.A.L. would sever its connection with the L.A. as a result of the termination of the 1929 Agreement, but it is for its members to decide whether it shall continue to function as an independent organization.

In connection with (a) the L.A. Reorganization Committee indicated that they proposed to recommend to the L.A. Council as follows :

- (a) The A.A.L. to remain a Section, but entirely within the framework of By-laws E 8-16.
- (b) That the Section be financed by a *per capita* grant not exceeding that for other Sections. [The Section capitation grant proposed was 3*s.* 6*d.* ; at present the A.A.L. receives a capitation grant of 6*s.* per annum, while other Sections submit annual estimates.]
- (c) The allocation of this grant, as between the central organization of the A.A.L. and its Divisions, to be in the hands of the A.A.L. Council, but all accounts (central and divisional) to be subject to audit by the L.A. and all unexpended balances to revert annually to the L.A. funds.
- (d) The appropriate By-laws to be amended so that a member of the L.A. may belong to only one Section (and one Branch) for capitation and voting purposes. Any member may, however, attend the meetings of any Branch or Section.
- (e) Members to notify the Secretary of the L.A. directly of the Section to which they wish to belong, and periodical confirmation may be required.

In answer to questions put by the A.A.L. representatives, the committee indicated that they could not recommend the L.A. Council to continue the

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status quo. We were also informed that the A.A.L. would be expected to meet all its domestic needs from the income derived from the 3s. 6d. capitation grant, but that specific grants for special purposes might be made on application to the L.A. Council. On further examination it transpired that the committee felt that the L.A. Council would probably be willing to pay a sum of money sufficient to meet the expenses of the A.A.L. library, and also meet any loss on the Correspondence Courses; *it was made quite clear, however, that they would not subsidize the publication of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT*, but that its cost should be met out of the capitation grant, which would appear to be impossible. All publications of the Section would require approval by the L.A. Council before being printed. The control of the A.A.L. Benevolent Fund would be in the hands of the Section committee. Further, the view was expressed by the Hon. Secretary of the L.A. that it was desirable to merge gradually Divisional organizations into existing Branches of the L.A., and to form Branches where only Divisions existed at present.

Your representatives felt justified in intimating that these proposals were not likely to meet with the approval of the A.A.L. Council.

On Friday, 9th April, these proposals of the L.A. Reorganization Committee were presented to the L.A. Council, being accompanied this time by a series of recommendations based on the original Amalgamation scheme. These recommendations differed radically from the original Amalgamation proposals. *The principle of regional organization was abandoned, as also the reconstitution of the L.A. Council on a territorial basis plus a general elective basis.* These were the two points of primary importance from the A.A.L. point of view, and it is not too much to say that had they not been accepted by the Joint Committee which drew up the original Amalgamation scheme, and subsequently by the L.A. Council itself, the Amalgamation proposals would not have been accepted by the A.A.L. Council and Divisions. Their abandonment by the L.A. Reorganization Committee (*three of the members of which were members of the Joint Committee which drew up the original scheme*) indicated a fundamental change of attitude. During the course of the discussion in the L.A. Council on the report of the Reorganization Committee, the Hon. Secretary of the L.A. (Mr. McColvin) stated that he had changed his views on this question of regional organization and representation on realizing that '*it would mean the control of the L.A. by the younger members.*'

After a long, involved, and critical discussion on the offer to the A.A.L.

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and the other reorganization recommendations, the whole report was referred back to the committee with an instruction to bring forward a scheme more in accord with the provisions of the original Amalgamation Proposals, after consulting all the Sections and Branches. This, despite a strong appeal made by the A.A.L. representatives on the Council and by the Hon. Secretary of the L.A. for no further delay in dealing with this matter. It was pointed out that the L.A. Reorganization Committee had done nothing for twelve months, and had only made an offer to the A.A.L. after the latter had tabled a motion for the L.A. Council. During the course of the debate, the A.A.L. members were asked if a further postponement of the notice terminating the 1929 Agreement would be accepted. This was refused, the March meeting of the A.A.L. Council having indicated that the affairs of the A.A.L. could not be carried on efficiently and vigorously under a sentence of dissolution which may be commuted from time to time. It ought to be mentioned also that, during the discussion on this matter at the L.A. Council, a motion was proposed 'that no provision be made for an Assistants' Section of the L.A.' This motion was subsequently withdrawn in favour of that which referred the whole matter back to the committee.

Thus the matter stands at present. The L.A. Reorganization Committee has to start afresh on its re-examination of the original Amalgamation Proposals, and this time has to do so in consultation with the various Sections and Branches. It is hardly likely that this re-examination will be completed for some considerable time, especially if the Sections and Branches offer much criticism of the original proposals. Meantime, the A.A.L. is under notice to cease as a Section of the L.A. on 31st December this year. It is obviously the duty of the Council and the Divisions to give serious consideration to this state of affairs in order that a statement may be submitted to the Annual Meeting of our members at Cardiff in June next.

The following courses of possible action appear to be open to us :

- (a) Allow the present termination notice to take effect on 31st December next and allow the A.A.L. to go out of existence altogether.
- (b) Endeavour to arrange a new agreement with the L.A., on somewhat similar lines to that at present in force.
- (c) Arrange for a postponement of the present notice terminating the 1929 Agreement, thus securing our continued existence until December 1938, by which time it is likely that the work of the L.A. Reorganization Committee would be completed.

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- (d) Intimate to the L.A. that we are willing to agree to the offer made by the L.A. Reorganization Committee on 31st March, *i.e.* become a Section of the L.A. strictly under the By-laws, at a capitation fee of 3s. 6d., etc.
- (e) Take steps as soon as possible to provide for the reversion of the A.A.L. to its former status as an independent organization at the expiry of the present agreement with the L.A.

The following observations on these various alternatives are submitted for the guidance of Divisional committees, but should not be construed as being the views of the A.A.L. Council, though it is likely that the majority of the Council would agree with them.

- (a) To allow the A.A.L. to go out of existence without having made possible the continuance of its spirit within the L.A. is unthinkable.
- (b) In view of the opinions expressed at the L.A. Reorganization Committee and during the debate on our motion at the L.A. Council, there would seem to be little hope of effecting any agreement on similar terms to those now operating.
- (c) During the last two years there has been an excusable tendency to postpone or shelve development projects in view of the fact that the A.A.L. might soon be going out of existence. One example of this might be cited. At various times during this period we have had requests from assistants in Reading and District, Bristol and District, the County of Kent, and Plymouth and District for the formation of Divisions in these areas. All these requests have been turned down, as it was not thought worth while to organize Divisions which would go out of existence in twelve or eighteen months. For this reason the Council does not think it would be worth while to accept any offer to postpone for a further period the notice terminating the 1929 Agreement. It is felt that we ought to know exactly where we stand: either in the L.A. with our existence guaranteed for a reasonably long period, or out of the L.A. at the end of this year.
- (d) It is hardly likely that the A.A.L. could function on 3s. 6d. per head and carry on the work which it has hitherto done. Almost certainly the publication of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT would have to cease, Divisional activities be curtailed or carried on by

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means of funds raised locally. It hardly seems equitable that the A.A.L. should receive as small a capitation as the other Sections when it is borne in mind that we do considerably more for our members in the way of meetings, classes, etc., than do either of the other Sections. In large tracts of the country we actually do the work which in other places is done by the Branches of the L.A. When considering this course, it should be realized that acceptance would mean the loss of the measure of autonomy in our domestic affairs which we have at present.

- (e) All things considered, it seems as though the only course open to us is to take steps to revert to our pre-1929 independence. This view is held by a considerable body of opinion on the A.A.L. Council. We must not lose sight, however, of all that this implies. The position is not simply a reversion to the *status quo*. We would require to build a new association, commencing probably with a relatively small membership, and attracting to our ranks as time went on those who found themselves more in agreement with our views than with the policy of any other library organization. It would probably be necessary for most of our younger members to retain their membership of the L.A. in order to sit the L.A. exams. and secure admission to the L.A. Register. How many of these young assistants would be willing and able to pay the two subscriptions necessary?

If it is the wish of the members that the A.A.L. should continue as indicated in (e), no time should be lost, as we ought to be ready to function immediately after 31st December, 1937, when the present Agreement expires.

I would be grateful if you would impress upon your committee the need for a careful, dispassionate examination of the position as it exists at present. Would you please indicate to me in writing your committee's decision on the matter not later than 3rd May. In view of the fundamental importance of the decisions to be taken at the Annual Meeting at Cardiff, *it is also very desirable that Divisional committees should arrange to be represented there by a delegate or delegates*, in addition to any parties which may be formed from your area. The meeting ought to be as representative as possible."

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The above memorandum was circulated as previously stated on 17th April. A few days later, on 22nd April, the L.A. Reorganization Committee met again to reconsider their previous report, referred back to them by the L.A. Council. The following extract from the minutes of that committee indicates a still further retreat from the provisions of the 1935 Amalgamation Proposals: "The Committee gave close and careful attention to an examination of the whole position and **RESOLVED** that, in view of all the prevailing circumstances, this Committee is of opinion that *the present time is inopportune for making changes in the constitution* and **RECOMMENDS** to the Council accordingly. The Council is, however, recommended to consider favourably any application for the formation of an Assistants' Section under By-laws E 8-16." Evidently the Committee gave up all hope of being able to produce a scheme which could reasonably be expected to receive the approval of the majority of the members of the Association, and in despair fell back upon the old hackneyed parliamentary excuse for delaying desired reforms—the *present time is inopportune for making changes!*

A special meeting of the L.A. Council was called for Tuesday, 4th May, to receive and discuss the report of its Reorganization Committee. Prior to this date I had received from the A.A.L. Divisions reports of the decisions taken by the Divisional committees on the memorandum of 17th April. *With one exception the Divisional committees voted in favour of the A.A.L. reverting to its previous position as an independent organization after 31st December, 1937!* But several Divisions suggested that before this drastic step was taken, a last attempt should be made to achieve agreement with the L.A. The Yorkshire Divisional Committee forwarded a suggestion that there should be a five years' truce, *i.e.* that the present Agreement between the L.A. and the A.A.L. should be extended for a period of five years until December 1942, during which time the whole question could be gone into again in detail in an attempt to work out a reorganization plan which would be acceptable to the large majority of the members of the profession. In accordance with these suggestions, when the L.A. Council met on 4th May to consider the report of the Reorganization Committee, this truce proposal was put forward, in a motion proposing the appointment of a new committee and the extension of the 1929 Agreement for a further period of five years. After a vigorous discussion the proposal was rejected by 14 votes to 11. During the discussion the Hon. Secretary of the L.A. (Mr. McColvin) made the astonishing suggestion that the real reason behind the advocacy

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of the 1935 Amalgamation Proposals by the A.A.L. members of the committee which drew up that scheme was not a desire to do the best for the profession as a whole, but a cunning plot on the part of assistants to swamp the L.A. Council and thus control the L.A. This contemptible suggestion does not really merit a reply. But two thoughts will no doubt occur to all assistants who have followed the details of this affair. If the suggestion were true, it says very little for the perspicacity of Mr. McColvin that it took him so long to realize the danger to the L.A. inherent in these machiavellian proposals, *in the compilation of which he actually took a most prominent part*. When, as is actually the case, there is not a vestige of truth in the suggestion, little encouragement is given to those who may be called upon to sacrifice their scanty leisure time in working for the interests of our professional association, in the reflection that they may be later accused of mean stratagems and plots.

After rejecting the A.A.L.'s truce proposal, the L.A. Council proceeded to reject the recommendation of its Reorganization Committee that "favourable consideration be given to any application for the formation of an Assistants' Section under By-laws E 8-16."

The A.A.L. Council met on 5th May, when it had before it the reports of the Divisional committees, and also verbal reports of the proceedings of the L.A. Council of the previous day. After a long and detailed discussion, the Council concluded that the only course open to it was to recommend to the members that steps be taken to "*carry on as an Association of Assistant Librarians, doing practically the same work as at present, but outside the L.A. instead of inside, and to broaden its scope in the future on lines to be determined by the support obtained.*" Accordingly the following resolution was unanimously adopted for submission to the members at the Annual Meeting in Cardiff on 16th June: "In view of the deplorable decision of the L.A. Council to terminate the existing Agreement with the A.A.L. Section on 31st December, 1937, and the L.A. Council's complete abandonment of the 1935 Amalgamation Proposals, this meeting approves of their Council's recommendation that steps be taken to ensure the continuance of the A.A.L. as an independent organization as from 1st January, 1938, and requests the Council to proceed with the drafting of a new constitution."

This decision was not taken in any light-hearted spirit. The Council is fully aware of all that it implies, of the hard work and self-sacrifice which will be called for in the near future from all who value the A.A.L. and what it stands for. But no other course seemed to be open to it, in view of the

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regrettably narrow attitude adopted and maintained by the majority of the members of the L.A. Council. The answer lies with the members of the A.A.L.

Valuations

STANLEY HOLLIDAY

BIBLIOGRAPHIES, miscellanies, reports, folders, and bulletins—that is the order of what is noticed or criticized below. Their number is suitably restricted, their nature is, as a whole, interesting, but the order does not necessarily represent their comparative importance.

I am scarcely competent to discuss with authority the contents of each of the five bibliographies, which certainly range over a wide field. There is "A Selected bibliography of co-operation,"¹ by Mr. Izant, of the *Co-operative Reference Library*, which seems a desirable addition to the vertical file. Its scope can best be indicated by a quotation from the author's introduction, noting that "this bibliography . . . represents an attempt to list the more important books and pamphlets on co-operation throughout the world, special emphasis being placed on agricultural co-operation"—since the work is a 40-page reprint from "The Year-book of agricultural co-operation" itself. As might be expected, "no references to articles in periodicals have been made," yet the 137 periodicals listed (including annuals) is a sufficiently formidable number. It appears likely that this bibliography will solve problems when dealing with those whose interest in the co-operative movement has been stimulated by recent actions at law, or who have been attracted by the magic figure of £300,000,000, representing the movement's yearly turnover in Great Britain.

Derby County has put out "The Study of the Bible, a short list of inexpensive books," intended primarily for teaching purposes, and with a foreword by Dr. Yeaxlee of Oxford, who, among other things, notes the value of the Institute of Christian Education as a source of specialized information. And *Kent County* panders both to the substance and the shadow with the issue of "Books on beekeeping," and "Modern European affairs" (*affaires* might have given a subtle touch to the title). There is a neatness about the smaller lists from *Kent* which is commendable. "New books" from this library, of which I have the February number, is quite an attractive production. However, back to the bees, the list on which might suitably

¹ *P. S. King & Son*; 6d.

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join Izant in the file. Miss Cooke has had the happy thought of including Rendl's little masterpiece, which vies with Maeterlinck for aery touch, and which provided the subject for an excellent short nature film some years ago. "Modern European affairs" could scarcely help striking a note of gloom, violence, and bloodiness. This list indicates the ever-present need for a county library to get titles over to its readers. Hence, while the books have been loosely grouped under headings which struck me as stereotyped and unattractive, there is no annotation, nor does the alphabetical author order under each heading give any indication of the relative importance or readability of the various works. Mr. Hilton Smith's remarks on this matter¹ have yet to be everywhere digested. It seems a pity, for example, to jam Gunther's vivid if cocksure "Inside Europe" between Grant and Temperley's "Europe 1789-1932" and Hampden Jackson's "Post-war world." I was also sorry to see Banse's hysterical "Germany prepare for war!" on the list—a publisher's stunt if there ever was one, while Ludendorff's far more significant "The Nation at war" (in view of that stiff-necked heathen's *rapprochement* with the Führer) receives no mention.

The Aslib "Classified list of annuals and yearbooks," the last of the five bibliographies, may perhaps be considered the most important. The list is mostly restricted to publications of scientific and technical interest, but some commercial and general works have been added. I support the opinion given in a circular accompanying the list, that it should be of considerable help to those in charge of reference libraries, especially of medium size, but I am not sure that the price of 3s. 6d. to the general public for a sixteen-page pamphlet is justified.

A simple folder describing *Leicester's* Wellington Street children's library is a triumph for good, clean colour, and cannot fail to attract those for whom it is intended. Really decisive colouring (such as achieved by *Oxford* and *Dundee* in moments of inspiration) makes all the difference in the world to the immediate appeal of a bit of print. As it was, I picked up this trifle from *Leicester*, said Hah! and gloated. Congratulations, but why the devil (permitted, Mr. Editor?) is the use of the library confined to those over nine years of age? Someone may enlighten me over this, though in the meantime I interject *quaere*, after the fashion of Anthony à Wood.

A tiny booklet from *Leyton*—"Membership and use of the public libraries"—disguises rules and regulations beneath a cover reminiscent of

¹ "Aids to public library readers," *L.A.R.*, N.S. VIII, 273.

The Library Assistant

"The Book collectors' quarterly." Reason—it is from the same excellent printing works. Mr. Sydney has had the good taste to head the rules with a qualifying introduction, remarking that "they are intended as a list of opportunities and not as a schedule of restrictions." Two things here call for comment. First is the somewhat colossal charge of one guinea per annum to those who are not permitted to join the libraries without fee; second, a slight matter to which others besides *Leyton* might care to attend. That is, to detail notifiable diseases besides recounting the penalties incurred under the P.H. Act of 1936 by those who knowingly contravene the law—even at the risk of imparting a morgue-like tone to the regulations.

It is not easy to see why "Open access" (the quarterly of the Midland A.A.L.) should have suffered from lack of support last year. It is proposed to continue publication, however, and there is no reason why I should not commend it to assistants throughout the country. The March issue at 4d., edited and almost wholly written by Messrs. Parish and Pearson of Brum, is good value, the high-spot being a readable article by friend Pearson on "The Cinema and the library." Mr. Pearson advocates that the library should endeavour to create intelligent film-goers by providing a wide selection of the best books and papers on the subject. *Liverpool* has gone two jumps ahead and installed a sound set.

The reports are something of a mixed bag: two regional systems, *Northern* and *East Midlands*, *Coulsdon and Purley's* first effort, a report from *Blyth*, the frankness of which embarrasses me, and the annual reckoning of the L.A.'s North Midland branch. Up and up is the tone of both the bureaux reports. Both record their sincere thanks to the Carnegie trustees, both report progress on union catalogues, and both have been playing that little game of what percentage of letter A, or B, or C, is in one library, two libraries, and so on. The editors of the bureaux have left me to say outright what careless scoundrels cataloguers are! Accuracy is essential, says the *East Midlands*, rummaging among bibliographies the while to correct and amplify the slips which they receive. And staff time at the *Northern* system is wasted in checking incomplete entries. What can, what does, a bureau editor say when faced with something so tragically simple as: "Shakespeare's plays—n.d."?

With a stock of 27,000 volumes *Coulsdon* is wrestling with seventeen and a half thousand readers. Mr. Callander has reason to be pleased with his first seven months' work, but stresses the need for more books. Those who recently had the pleasure of inspecting his equipment, and those who are

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grateful for his influence on library literature, will wish him well for the current year.

Colchester's leaflet on "Coronation reading" strikes a decorative note. Its contents comprise the histories of a number of monarchs, books concerned with aspects of the Throne, and similar matters. It must be difficult for a librarian to feel thoroughly satisfied with what he has to offer on occasions such as these. The profession would not be exceeding its rights were it to raise a censorious voice about the literary quality of contemporary works purporting to describe the members and the duties of the reigning house.

Paddington's booklist, which seems to me continually to chop and change in size and shape, rightly calls attention to that excellent piece of modern English prose—Hutchins' "Higher learning in America." I hope few have missed the book, which has a quality rarely to be found in these days of hurried writing. I put it in the jewel-box, together with such rare items as J. A. Smith's preface to the English translation of Croce's autobiography, and the flawless crystal of Gibbon, chapter 1.

The lengthier material of the magazine type gets little space this month. Mr. O'Leary and any others who have faith in mankind will welcome the news contained in the junior bulletin "Treasure land," that a no-fines experiment is taking place at *Fulham* children's library. A further concession is reservation (except school stories and "William" books—a delightful touch) for young readers without payment. One hopes that such enthusiasm is repaid. Another and different news item in the Spring "Record" of the *Newcastle Lit. and Phil.* relates more dirty deeds by Mr. Pepys, this time manuscript thefts from Durham Chapter Library—by that same Samuel, remember, who flew into a wild panic when he missed a hamper of books on their way back from Deptford after the Great Fire.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge *Southport's* quarterly list, because it contains as a motto a quotation from Goldsmith—"In proportion as society refines, new books must ever become more necessary." I hope interest will be stirred in Noll's remark. With reference to its exact terms, I am prepared to back the *con.* side.

From Lahore we have received a copy of the "Modern librarian: a quarterly journal," by courtesy of the managing editor, Mr. Bhatia. Produced by the Forman Christian College Library, it is at the same time the official organ of the Punjab Library Association. This number is distinguished by an article by Mr. Raganathan on "The School library and civic training," a useful disquisition on the library habits of a community some-

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what different from our own, but which has equally a message for western citizens. There is a missionary fervour, a keenness about the general tone of the "Modern librarian," together with a genuine appreciation of trends and motives, that commend it to the attention of all whose interests are not bounded by their own bookstacks.



The Divisions

MIDLAND DIVISION

ON Thursday, 11th March, a joint meeting of the Birmingham and District Branch and the Midland Division of the A.A.L. Section was held at Stafford. During the afternoon, members visited the Lotus Shoe Factory and were much impressed by what they saw of the art and science of mechanized shoe-making. Afterwards, at Jenkinson's Café, Councillor Tooth, Vice-Chairman of the Public Library Committee, welcomed the members on behalf of Councillor Miss Westhead, Chairman of the Committee, who was regrettably absent through illness. During tea, which was kindly provided by the Committee, the Mayor joined the party and also extended to them a hearty welcome.

Tea was followed by the Junior Meeting under the chairmanship of Mr. J. C. Sharp (Birmingham Reference Library), which opened with a paper by Mr. K. J. Rider (also of Birmingham Reference Library) on "The life and works of W. H. Davies." Mr. Rider delighted his audience with an excellent survey of his subject which fully merited the warm applause which it received.

Mr. K. A. L. Roberts (Small Heath Branch Library, Birmingham) then read a paper on "The provision of text-books for Library Association examinations," in which he suggested that it was necessary that every student should have for his own use during preparation for examination a complete set of the text-books appropriate to his subject. He then proceeded to show, from the statistics collected by the Joint Committee, that outside Birmingham and Coventry, the provision of professional text-books in libraries in the area of the Regional Library Bureau (West Midlands) was very poor. Mr. Roberts supposed that this state of affairs was fairly general throughout the country and suggested the establishment of a scheme for hiring books to students, which he had worked out in considerable detail. While the scheme showed evidence of very careful thought and was in itself

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a monument to the thoroughness with which its sponsor had examined the problem, the fact that he left unanswered certain vital questions, such as the source from which was to be borrowed the £13,000 estimated to be necessary to purchase sufficient copies of the required books, rather left things in the air.

Mr. H. M. Cashmore (City Librarian, Birmingham) then took the chair for the Library Association Meeting, the principal feature of which was a delightful paper by Mr. K. G. Fletcher (Librarian and Curator, Stafford) on "Stafford's literary associations." His survey was full of interest from start to finish, and he captured and held the attention of his audience throughout with his sketches of Izaak Walton, Mrs. Craik and her father, Thomas Mulock, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, George Burrow as hostler at the Swan Hotel, and Charles Dickens's biting criticism of the same inn. Judging from the applause which the author received, it was clear that the paper was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone present. Mr. Fletcher was very cordially thanked both for his paper and his co-operation in arranging the meeting.

YORKSHIRE DIVISION

A meeting of the Division was held in Wakefield on Thursday, 18th March. This was the first meeting to be held on a Thursday for many years. The attendance was, in spite of a change in the day of the meeting, quite good, being approximately eighty members.

During the afternoon members had the opportunity to inspect the new extension of the Wakefield City Library. After being welcomed to the city by Alderman A. Carr, Chairman of the Library Committee, they were then conveyed by motor buses to Clarke Hall, the residence of Mr. Haldane, who is a member of the Wakefield Library, Art Gallery, and Museum Committee. Clarke Hall, a Tudor residence, also containing a collection of Tudor period treasures, was of great interest to all members. Mr. and Mrs. Haldane personally conducted the visitors round, explaining everything in detail. Before leaving this wonderful house, Mr. Marr, supported by Mr. Bebbington, expressed the thanks of all members for the great privilege the Division had experienced in being shown over a house still in occupation.

The party then journeyed to Holmfild Park, where tea was served in Holmfild House by kind invitation of the Library, Art Gallery, and Museum Committee. The evening meeting, also held in Holmfild House, was occupied with a paper entitled "The Smaller library: random reflec-

The Library Assistant

tions," by Mr. R. C. Sayell (Deputy Librarian, Wakefield), dealing with various aspects of service in towns of about 60,000 inhabitants. Towns of this size, the speaker urged, should concentrate on establishing a first-class central library before providing service points in some form in various parts of the area. Figures submitted showed that towns with only one library were spending more on books and attracting a bigger percentage of population as readers than were those having branches. In order to provide for readers unable to make frequent visits to the library, two general tickets and two for non-fiction should be allowed. Since all assistants in the smaller library come into frequent contact with the public, they should all be encouraged to supplement daily experience by general reading and study for the L.A. examinations—there should be no division into "clerical" and "technical" grades. The wonderful service being rendered by the Yorkshire Regional Scheme, the comparative merits of large and small systems as training grounds for librarianship and the necessity for revising stock such as Shakespeare collections, 870-880 sections, etc. (discarding so often being confined to technical and scientific books), were also discussed.

Mr. Sayell considered that all towns of over 40,000 inhabitants should have a full-time children's assistant, and recommended the purchase of practically all juvenile books in reinforced bindings. Various other points were mentioned, and the speaker concluded with a plea for the continuance of the Assistants' Section.

The many points raised in Mr. Sayell's paper brought forth a good discussion which centred mostly round the relative value from the assistant's point of view of training in a small or a large library and the knotty problems of book buying for a smaller population.

Messrs. Gillett (Leeds), Tomlinson (Wakefield), Lamb (Sheffield), Hampson (Sheffield), and Drewery (Hull) all contributed to the discussion. Mr. Sayell, after replying to the points raised in the discussion, was very warmly thanked by Mr. Drewery of Hull, supported by Miss Edwards, of the West Riding.

Mr. G. H. Wood, Chief Librarian of the Wakefield Library, who had been untiring in his efforts to arrange the programme, was thanked by Miss Walton, of Sheffield, and Mr. Dove, of Heckmondwike.

KENT LIBRARY GUILD

A meeting was held at the Rochester Public Library on Wednesday, 17th March. The Guild was welcomed by Councillor Palmer, a member of the Library Committee.

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A symposium on the Library Association examinations was then read by Miss M. E. Barty (Deal), Miss M. A. Bramble (Dover), Mr. J. E. V. Birch (Tonbridge), and Mr. J. T. White (Margate). Among the points raised by the speakers and by the participants in the discussion which followed, none received more attention than the problem of text-books; some felt that the extant text-books were inadequate and/or misleading, others that the text-books were reasonably good but were not available in sufficient numbers. The slackness of correspondence-course tutors, the need for standardized correspondence courses, the new syllabus, and, of course, the "D.L.A.," all received attention.

After tea, kindly provided by the Rochester Public Library Committee, members adjourned to the Guildhall and inspected the city regalia.

New Members

CENTRAL.—Miss L. Blow (Ilford); Miss M. J. Corrie (Orpington); R. Dennington (Ilford); Miss P. Freestone (Sidcup); Miss E. M. Giffin (Orpington); Miss S. V. McDonald (Gillingham); Miss J. Mason (Nottingham); K. H. Milsom (Wimbledon); Miss P. Nuttall (Ilford); Miss S. Pyniger (Nottingham); Miss E. Reason (Nottingham); Miss N. L. Ridout (Sheerness); Miss J. G. E. Sutherland (Fife County); Miss F. Vine (Nottingham); A. D. Wilshire (Ilford).

Midland.—Miss J. Lawrence (Birmingham); Miss M. P. Owen (Shrewsbury); Miss N. B. Stevens (Cheltenham); B. N. Ward, Miss B. Wilson (Nuneaton).

North-East.—Miss D. Bell (North Shields); Miss M. Bowes (Sunderland); Miss J. M. Brown (North Shields); I. E. Burton (Middlesbrough); Miss M. L. Chapman, Miss W. Coates, Miss L. Dawson (Sunderland); A. J. Fuguel, Miss N. Furness, A. G. Harrison (Middlesbrough); Miss D. Herring (Sunderland); C. B. Hurren (Middlesbrough); A. King (North Shields); E. W. Kirtley, Miss D. McCree (Sunderland); Miss G. Pearce (Middlesbrough); Miss M. Whipp (North Shields).

North-West.—Miss A. Cheetham (Wigan); J. H. Clay (Salford); Miss F. Critchley (Birkenhead); Miss D. G. Dance (Liverpool); Miss V. G. Drury (Southport); Miss R. C. Garlick (Birkenhead); Miss S. M. Gill (Wigan); Miss A. M. Gilliland (Birkenhead); Miss B. A. Glass (Birkenhead); Miss F. M. Green (Wigan); H. R. Hikins (Liverpool); Miss J. Hoyle (Southport); Miss M. Jefferson (Manchester); Miss D. Johnson

The Library Assistant

(Lancs. County, Orrell); A. Jones (Bootle); Miss V. Jones (Hoylake); J. B. Kalar, Miss D. V. Ledingham (Liverpool); Miss J. Marshall, Miss C. M. Nelson, Miss S. Porter (Southport); E. Pugh (Bootle); Miss G. Robinson (Southport); E. B. Smith (Bootle); Miss A. Snape (Southport); Miss E. Tabern (St. Helens); F. Howard (Ashton-under-Lyne).

Yorkshire.—Miss J. Finister (Leeds); Miss M. Sheader, Miss J. Wilson (Scarborough).

Correspondence

PUBLIC LIBRARY,
DEWSBURY.

13th April, 1937.

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,—

In response to Mr. Anderson's plea in the April issue of *THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT* for observations from Junior Librarians upon the problem of catering for adolescent readers, I venture to give a short account of the method in use at Dewsbury.

Five years have elapsed since our junior library was opened, and during that time we have discussed again and again what to do with these young people who are too old for children's books and too young for adults'.

It seemed to us that the first move towards establishing definite contact between the two departments—apart from the idea of a separate department for Intermediates—was to include in the stock of the junior library books leading up to those which will be found in the adult section. There are to be found on our junior shelves the books of Jeffery Farnol, Arthur Conan Doyle, Baroness Orczy, John Buchan, Gene Stratton-Porter, Jean Webster, and many other such writers.

Having thus provided a small stock of these transition books in our junior library, it seemed reasonable to place a similar supply in the adult library. We felt that the two stocks would dovetail more completely, and when the young reader finds his way there, he will feel more at ease when he sees familiar titles. This system of duplication has proved so successful that it is being steadily extended. In fact, our stock of these books has grown so much that our next intention is to put them together in a corner of our junior room, and provide what might be called our "Intermediate Corner."

The provision of separate departments has brought in its train this difficulty, which may have been partly unsuspected by their originators, and

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has widened the gap which already existed between the junior library and the adults.

Yours faithfully,

IRENE LITTLEWOOD,
Children's Librarian.

PUBLIC LIBRARY,
HUDDERSFIELD.

19th April, 1937.

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,—

We are grateful for Mr. Cranshaw's points of view concerning the Public and the Catalogue which appeared in the March ASSISTANT. Clearly, the day has not arrived for us to make whoopee; but whether the question is really one concerning the form of the catalogue is one which deserves most serious consideration.

Are Mr. Cranshaw's somewhat disparaging remarks on some aspects of the Classified catalogue actually directed at the catalogue as such or at the Dewey classification? Dewey, as we know it, is notoriously lacking in many of the essentials of classification, and it is a natural corollary of this that a catalogue founded on that scheme will contain faults.

Mr. Cranshaw indicates that such subjects as Psychology, Civilization, Children, Animals, etc., each require five to fifteen places in the schedules of a classification, and points out that, while the Classified catalogue thus disperses material, the Dictionary form tends to bring it together. Ignoring the idiosyncrasies of Dewey, are we to compare this with the Dictionary catalogue's treatment of, say, Agriculture, Horticulture, Gardening, Vegetables, and so on?

One point which must be considered is whether or not the public are truly grateful to the compilers of Dictionary catalogues for bringing into one alphabetical sequence authors' names, subjects, and titles. Observe in this connexion the change brought about in the index to Whitaker's *Reference catalogue* (1928 edition).

On the question of the index to the Classified catalogue, Mr. Cranshaw's remarks were very much to the point; but with the compilation of a definitely adequate index, does not Melvil Dewey's own answer to the advocates of the Dictionary catalogue to a large extent hold good? Or are we verging on the rocks of Mr. Bliss's "subject-index illusion" . . .?

Yours faithfully,

W. J. SWALES.

The Library Assistant

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNTY LIBRARIES,
COUNTY OFFICES, BATH STREET, HEREFORD.

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

19th April, 1937.

DEAR SIR,—

"Pauper et Inops," in his letter in the April issue, pleads for a reversion to the system of examinations under which one subject could be taken at a time. He claims that it would be more in touch with the realities of the situation than the new syllabus.

I made the same plea when the 1933 Syllabus was introduced, in the course of a debate held at Chaucer House on the 10th January, 1934, and I have had no reason since then to modify my views. Indeed, having watched many assistants struggling vainly to qualify for even the Associateship, and failing for lack of adequate time for study, I feel even more strongly than I did three years ago, that the sectional examinations were a more practical method, and one better adopted to the peculiar conditions of our profession.

I do not claim that the older method was ideal—I agree with "Pauper et Inops" that there should have been a definite order in which the subjects were taken—but I do claim that the new syllabus is *unfairly* difficult to many assistants. Where is the virtue in making candidates strain every nerve to qualify, sacrificing the whole of their leisure in the process; surely there can be no objection to letting them mount the ladder step by step, instead of by a series of exhausting leaps? Cover the same ground by all means, and exact the same high standard, but do let it be reasonably possible for all assistants with the necessary ability to qualify. If those responsible would consider more the difficulties they experienced in their own early days, and less the practice of other and quite different professions, a more humane attitude might prevail.

It matters nothing if a doctor has no interests outside his work, if an accountant dreams of nothing but figures. But if a library assistant has not the leisure in his youth to take an interest in other things besides the technicalities of his profession, then he can never develop into a true librarian, with the wide range of interests which this implies. The new syllabus shows an altogether callous disregard for the fact that some assistants may have other interests in life besides librarianship.

Yours faithfully,

B. OLIPH SMITH,
County Librarian.

The Library Assistant

CARNEGIE LIBRARY,
HERNE HILL ROAD,
LONDON, S.E.24.

6th May, 1937.

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,—

With reference to the recent correspondence regarding the correspondence courses, I wish to protest against the letter of Mr. Hargreaves. Members are likely to understand from his letter that he is in close touch with the whole organization of these courses, although actually he has never had any connexion with it.

Mr. Hargreaves talks of the appearance of many dog-eared courses. How many courses does he see during the year? Some nine hundred courses were sent out last year, and not one complaint about bad condition reached me.

Tutors will inform you that they are rarely able to use a course a second time, so the impression that courses are used year after year is ridiculous.

Mr. Hargreaves states that he, at any rate, has cause for anxiety over the method of appointing tutors. I do not believe for one moment he understands how tutors are appointed. May I be permitted to mention what does happen. In the first place, when a member applies to become a tutor, or someone is suggested to me, I immediately obtain the opinion of the divisional committee, or, if the member is not attached to a particular division, I obtain the opinion of some other responsible person or persons. Not until then is the prospective tutor asked to prepare, first an outline course, and when this has been passed as satisfactory by the Section Editor, the complete course in detail. Only after this completed course has been passed in both detail and make-up will the Council accept a person as a tutor. He should state that *he* knows persons who are now tutors and have had the greatest difficulty in passing the examinations themselves. *We* do not know it, or we should not have appointed them as tutors. In this connexion I understand Mr. Hargreaves to mean the actual subject in which they teach, for personally I am strongly of the opinion that any person can be a specialist and be absolutely competent to teach in one subject but totally unsuited to teach another.

Whilst writing, I should like to make brief comments on points raised in the remaining letters dealing with this question.

Mr. Pearson remarks upon Mr. Halliday's suggestion of the large percentage of unsuitable students. I would mention that the examining body

The Library Assistant

of the Library Association are of the same opinion, that it is the general complaint of the large majority of our tutors, and that unfortunately I, as Hon. Education Secretary, must fully agree with their sentiments. I am caused a great deal of extra work during the year by a number of students who, either through incompetence or carelessness, cannot even send in a correct application for a course.

The question of printed courses has been before the Education Committee for some time, but it should be realized that such a project cannot be completed just by the Council saying, "We will have standard courses." The "competent authorities" have to be set up, and then these authorities have to agree among themselves. Anyone who has endeavoured to "arrange" for a body of persons will know what that means.

Mr. Neal, in the current issue of *THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT*, states that "at some time" he has suffered under the same yoke as Mr. Hargreaves. I trust that he is not writing of a course of more than a year or two back, as since then the Committee and tutors together have spent a vast amount of time and work reorganizing and improving the courses. We had hoped that students had realized this. If any student still receives what he considers an unsatisfactory course, he should, in the interests of all members, inform me, when the complaint will receive the careful attention of the Committee and Council. All complaints receive immediate attention—but Mr. Neal should not make the mistake of saying that there are plenty of excellent people waiting to take the place of any unsuitable tutor. A list of such excellent people would frequently be of great use to me.

A short while ago the Committee went to the trouble of circularizing some seventy students who had taken courses but had not sat for the examinations. Twenty-seven replies only were received, and in no case was dissatisfaction with the courses given as an excuse for not sitting the examinations.

I suggest that it would be better for students who have a grumble to make it known to the Committee, through me, and that at least some others who wish to write in to the Editor should be certain of their facts and not make sweeping statements likely to mislead the members at large. Constructive criticism is always useful to an organizing body, and I am certain that in the case of the A.A.L. Council, it will always be welcome.

Yours, etc.,

S. W. MARTIN,
Hon. Education Secretary.

The Library Assistant

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

PUBLIC LIBRARY,
BLYTH, NORTHUMBERLAND.

DEAR SIR,—

8th May, 1937.

As one of the tutors whose work is criticized in your May issue, will you afford me space for the following comment?

By grouping impressions of more than one tutor into a sequence, your correspondent has been able to construct an apparently damaging case against the correspondence courses as a whole. This I assert to be neither a very effective nor a very honest way of getting in a kick.

I would remind Mr. Huddy, and any of your readers whom his remarks may have impressed, that the proper way to register a complaint against a course is through the Education Committee, and I will not believe that a man who has written as Mr. Huddy has now written would have any compunction about doing so. Complete silence on the Education Committee's part persuades me that he did not.

Mr. Huddy's work for me was good, consequently, my marks were high, my criticism sparse. Is this not enough, or is the value of a course to be judged solely on the amount of red ink used by the tutor?

The two definite criticisms offered by Mr. Huddy in support of his complaint are not in themselves significant, and I am content for it to be known that they are of my course.

It is the generalizing to which I object. I greatly resent being grouped by implication with any tutors whose marking is said to lack conscience and system, or who do not trouble to mark each question separately, and it is in protest against such generalizing that this letter is written. It is doubtful as to whether any one tutor's course is quite perfect, but the impression Mr. Huddy's collective criticism conveys needs destroying.

Confidence in the courses may be further strengthened if I make it known that of the twelve students who worked that particular revision course with Mr. Huddy, seven satisfied the examiners, and even though they all twelve sat, 60 per cent. success is a pleasantly greater proportion in one small group than is the figure for the whole examination.

May I add what Mr. Huddy modestly refrains from mentioning, that, having used my course to the full, having taken advantage of my quite unofficial offer to enter into discussion or answer questions outside the scope of a short revision course, he sat the examination, and was one of the seven who satisfied the examiners in that part of the paper represented by my course.

Your readers will know what value to place on criticism based on so ungenerous an attitude.

Yours faithfully, J. D. REYNOLDS.

The Library Assistant

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